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2020 SAMHSA SOAR MARCH E-NEWS

Unaccompanied Youth Brief

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is proud to announce the release of a NEW issue brief, *Connecting Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness to Social Security Disability Benefits!* This issue brief, developed by the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, explores how the SOAR model can be applied to runaway and homeless youth (RHY) to promote access to income and health insurance, facilitate housing stability, and support youth pursuing education and vocational goals.

The 2019 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Point-in-Time Count found that over 35,000 unaccompanied youth were experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness at a single point in time. Studies show that youth who identify as black or multiracial and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (or Queer) have the highest rates of homelessness.

The issue brief provides an overview of the demographics of the RHY population, risk factors for youth homelessness, strategies to engage RHY in the SAMHSA SOAR process, and employment and resiliency resources to support youth who are connected to disability benefits. Download the full issue brief to learn more!

Download the Issue Brief



Connecting Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness to Social Security Disability Benefits

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) model helps increase access to Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits for children, youth, and adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness who have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder. Use of the SOAR model's critical components can increase approval rates on SSI/SSDI applications, resulting in a significant step toward housing stability, resiliency, and recovery. SOAR's intensive engagement process and holistic approach to SSI/SSDI application assistance can be a critical support for unaccompanied Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY), particularly those experiencing intersectional identities,* including black and other non-white youth and youth who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (or Queer) (LGBTQ+).

The Issue

For the purposes of this brief, we use the term **unaccompanied youth** to describe persons under the age of 25 who are not part of a family with children or not accompanied by a parent or guardian during their episode of homelessness.

How Many Youth Experience Unaccompanied Homelessness?

The nature of youth homelessness makes it difficult to accurately ascertain the frequency and duration of youth experiences of homelessness, as many may be undercounted due to staying with friends or family (e.g., sleeping on couches or doubling up) or due to returning home prior to accessing services. The 2019 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Point-in-Time Count found that over 35,000 unaccompanied youth were experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness at a single point in time in January 2019. Further, data from the National Center for Homeless Education reports that during the 2016-2017 school year, 118,364 youth experiencing homelessness were enrolled in public schools (8.7 percent of the total population of students experiencing homelessness).¹ This data, from the U.S. Department of Education, includes students who are living "double up" with others. A study

by Chapin Hall estimates that each year 1 in 30 youth, ages 13 to 17, and 1 in 10 young adults, ages 18 to 25, experience some form of homelessness.²

Disproportionate Representation of LGBTQ+ Youth

Studies have consistently shown that LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately represented in systems of care and the RHY population. LGBTQ+ youth comprise between 30-45 percent of the overall RHY population, compared to an estimated 5-10 percent of the overall youth population,³ with the greatest over-representation occurring among RHY populations in large urban areas. Further, studies show that youth who identified as black or multiracial and LGBTQ+ had the highest rates of homelessness.⁴

Youth Homelessness and Behavioral Health

Youth experiencing homelessness have higher rates of negative health outcomes compared to their housed counterparts including HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, behavioral health disorders, substance misuse, and violent victimization. Specifically, LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness are significantly more likely than their heterosexual youth experiencing homelessness counterparts to have a current major depressive episode, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal ideation, and at least one suicide attempt.⁵ Transgender youth also

* Intersectional identities or intersectionality recognizes that the social and political identity markers (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality) that describe us overlap and intersect.

Updated and Enhanced SSA-1696!

SSA has released an updated SSA-1696. The form revisions include a restructuring of the form into eight sections:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Form SSA-1696 (03-20-20) UFI
Discontinue Prior Editions
Social Security Administration | Page 3 of 6
OMB No. 0960-0227 |
| Claimant's Social Security Number
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> - <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> - <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> | Appointed Representative's Reg ID
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> - <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> - <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> |
| <h2 style="margin: 0;">Claimant's Appointment of a Representative</h2> | |
| Section 1 - Claimant's Information | |
| Social Security Number
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> - <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> - <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> | |
| First Name
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> | Initial Last Name
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> |
| Mailing Address
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 40px; margin: 2px;"></div> | |
| City
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> | State ZIP/Postal Code Country - if outside the U.S.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> |
| Phone Number
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> | Alternate Phone Number (Optional)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> |
| Country/Area Code Phone Number
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> | Country/Area Code Phone Number
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> |
| Number Holder's Information (Complete when applicable) | |
| My claim is based on another person's work or earnings (i.e., spouse or parent). This person's information is different from mine. | |
| Number Holder's Social Security Number
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> - <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> - <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> | |
| First Name
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> | Initial Last Name
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin: 2px;"></div> |
| Section 2 - Disclosure (Claimant Only) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> By selecting this box, I, the claimant listed in Section 1, whose signature appears in Section 8, authorize SSA to release information in relation to my pending claimant(s) or asserted right(s) to designated associates who perform administrative duties (i.e., clerks, assistants), partners, or parties under contractual arrangements for or with my representative. The appointed representative's partners, associates, delegates and designees must be prepared to provide information in order to be authenticated. | |
| Section 3 - Principal Representative (Claimant only – Complete when applicable) | |
| I have appointed before, or appoint now, more than one representative. I ask SSA to make contacts or send notices to this individual. My principal representative is: | |
| Name | |

We encourage you to use SSA's fillable and savable form for your SOAR-assisted claims and strongly encourage you to **stop use** of any prior versions of the SSA-1696.

Orlando Leadership Academy Recap



From February 4-6, 2020, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center facilitated a SOAR Leadership Academy

in Orlando, Florida. Dazara Ware, Pam Heine, and Abigail Kirkman of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center facilitated the training. Twenty-nine participants representing 17 states and Washington, DC (AZ, CA, DE, FL, IL, KY, MA, MI, MN, MO, NC, NE, NJ, NY, PA, TX, and VA) attended the Leadership Academy. Highlights of the meeting included enthusiastic participation and great discussion from attendees. This was a testament to our new Local Leads' commitment to learning how to use SOAR to achieve our goals of ending homelessness. Now, go forth and SOAR!

Sharing Our Successes

Homeless in San Diego Podcast Highlights SOAR Model!



Interfaith Community Services has a fantastic podcast, *Homeless in San Diego*, that shares the myths and realities of homelessness and offers strategies for how people can help. A recent podcast episode, "Housing: SOAR to Success," highlights the SOAR model through the experiences of Kate Jones, Interfaith SOAR Case Manager, and Greg, Interfaith SOAR program's very first success story. Listen to the episode to hear how Greg and Interfaith SOAR!

[Listen to the Podcast Episode](#)



A California SOAR Specialist's First SOAR-Assisted Application AND First Approval

Norma Martinez from Interfaith Community Services in Escondido, California wrote in to share this great SOAR success:

Demetrius* had been experiencing homelessness for 5 years and was diagnosed with a severe mental illness that interfered with his work ability. Demetrius was a resident at our emergency homeless shelter and was referred to me by the shelter case manager. Demetrius had previously applied for disability benefits in his home state, where he had been living in his car for 2 years but was denied. We worked together to submit a SOAR-assisted disability benefit application, and Demetrius was awarded both Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Demetrius was permanently housed within nearly 2 weeks of being awarded. He is now able to cook meals in his own environment. "This was my first SOAR application, and it was so exciting to receive an approval on my first-ever application!"

Congratulations, Norma! When asked what advice she would to other SOAR specialists, Norma recommended that SOAR specialists gather all medical records, even if treating sources are out of state and be persistent. Keep SOARing, Norma!

Veteran SOARs in Michigan

Alexis Smith from Michigan Ability Partners in Ann Arbor, Michigan, wrote in to share a fantastic success story:

Joshua* was a resident of our agency's transitional housing program for Veterans. He had recently moved to Michigan, as his sisters

thought his living situation in Texas was unsafe and thought it best for him to move closer to them. Joshua was experiencing very serious mental health and physical health issues. His sisters took him to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital after a psychotic episode and connected him to local housing services.



Using the SOAR model was very quick and effective for Joshua's case! While he was denied for SSI due to having property in his name in Texas, he was granted SSDI. Joshua now receives a little over \$1,800 each month. He can buy groceries for himself and hopes to get a phone to more easily connect with his case worker, sisters, and nephew.

Way to go, Alexis! What a great success story! Alexis's advice to other SOAR specialists is to "enjoy the medical records." "Joshua's records revealed so much; it really opened my eyes to the severity of his mental illness and made writing the MSR very enjoyable." Thanks for sharing, Alexis!

[Submit Your SOAR Success](#)

*Sharing Our Successes stories are edited for brevity and clarity. All client names have been changed to protect anonymity.

SOAR Job Postings

Florida

Dawning Family Services is seeking a part-time SOAR Specialist based in Tampa, Florida. The successful candidate will screen clients for eligibility for disability income benefits administered by SSA and apply for benefits on behalf of those found eligible.

Learn more about this posting on the [SOARWorks website](#). Do you have a job posting you would like to share with the SOAR community? Submit it to the [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center](#)!

Events

SOAR and Criminal Justice System Implementation

March 25, 2020; 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET

SAMHSA SOAR Webinar: SOAR and Criminal Justice System Implementation

March 25, 2020, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center has been helping local corrections and community transition staff integrate benefit options with community reentry strategies for people with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders to promote post-release success for many years. The increased use of the SOAR model as a tool for reentry services leads to income to access housing and insurance to access treatment and programs.

In this webinar, we will share information on the connections between serious mental illness, homelessness, and incarceration. You will learn more about what happens to SSI/SSDI benefits when a recipient becomes incarcerated and best practices for increasing access to SSI/SSDI benefits for people with serious mental illness who are reentering communities from jails and prisons.

[Learn More and Register](#)

SOARing Over Lunch Conference Calls

April 7, 2020, 1:00 p.m. ET

The next SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call will take place on April 7, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. ET! The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center hosts this series of informal monthly calls designed to help support SOAR efforts across the country. Participants can join to ask about any SOAR-related question they may have.

[Add SOARing Over Lunch to Your Calendar](#)

Funding Corner

Funding Availability: Homeless Providers VA Grant and Per Diem

Program

Application deadline: April 22, 2020

VA has announced the availability of funds to eligible entities to provide per diem payments for the Transition in Place housing model to facilitate housing stabilization for Veterans who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness under VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program. VA expects to award funding to pay per diem for approximately 450 beds with this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). The NOFA includes the application of the SOAR model in the required application documentation (item 16):

"In approximately 500 words, describe how you will aid Veterans who seek employment and income maximization goals, such as increased income, increased benefits, reduced expenses, or improved financial management skills. Please note that services such as Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) and other income maximization strategies may be used by applicants."

Get Social with the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Hear more about what SAMHSA SOAR is up to via [@samhsagov](https://twitter.com/samhsagov) on Twitter, [@samhsa](https://www.facebook.com/samhsa) on Facebook, and [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](https://www.linkedin.com/company/substance-abuse-and-mental-health-services-administration) on LinkedIn!

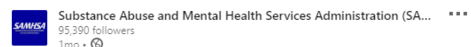


How does [#opioid](#) and other substance use affect SOAR apps for individuals experiencing or at risk of [#homelessness](#)?

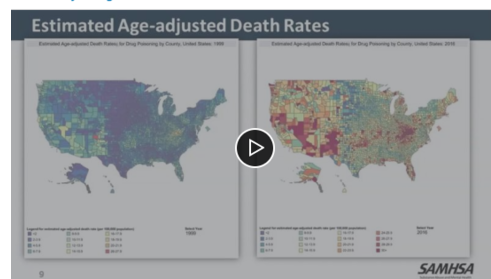
Watch and learn from this SAMHSA SOAR TA Center webinar youtu.be/0deYA_i62mg [#TuesdayThoughts](#)



SOAR Webinar: Understanding and Documenting Opioid and ...
This webinar, held on December 12, 2018 and hosted by the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, explored how opioid and other ...
[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)



How does [#opioid](#) and other substance use affect SOAR apps for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness?
Watch and learn from this SAMHSA SOAR TA Center webinar https://youtu.be/0deYA_i62mg
[#TuesdayThoughts](#)



SOAR Webinar: Understanding and Documenting Opioid and Other Substance...
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The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is sponsored by SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

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